

A teacher's assistant or a bus driver should be focused on their precious students, not how they are going to keep the electricity on at home or clothe a growing child or stave off an army of bill collectors.

I remain hopeful that our colleagues in the other body will reward the dedication of Head Start teachers by adequately funding the Head Start Program. I also remain hopeful that the Dane County Parent Council will recognize the value of their workers through expeditious resolution of the remaining economic and noneconomic disputes in their contract.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. SOUDER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SOUDER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BERRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. BLACKBURN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SMITH of Michigan addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

□ 2045

TEA-LU EQUALS JOBS, JOBS, JOBS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FRANKS of Arizona). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. LIPINSKI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, on May 14 of this year, after months and months of delay, the administration finally released their TEA-21 reauthorization proposal. Called SAFETEA, the administration's proposal will authorize \$247 billion for surface transportation programs.

In contrast, TEA-21 authorized \$218 billion over 6 years for our Nation's surface transportation needs. While the landmark legislation made tremendous advancements towards addressing those needs, we still have much work to do. The next reauthorization must advance on the successes and priorities of TEA-21 and take into account our future needs as well.

Unfortunately, SAFETEA fails miserably in that regard. When we factor in inflation, SAFETEA's \$247 billion funding level would mean a flatline of current transportation spending.

While I admire the administration's laser-like focus on flatlining surface transportation investments in their proposal, the fact of the matter is that SAFETEA is shortsighted and inadequate.

The administration's SAFETEA proposal is too little, too late, especially in today's gloomy economy. We now have 6.1 percent unemployment rate. This is the highest level since July, 1994. The unemployment rate for construction workers is even higher at 7.1 percent. In a time where nearly 9 million Americans are out of work, over 4 million Americans are underemployed, and nearly 2 million Americans have been out of a job for more than 6 months, we need something more than SAFETEA.

What this Nation needs is a bold and innovative economic stimulus plan. What this Nation needs is a robust public works funding package, and what the administration has proposed just is not it.

What we need is the proposal laid out by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Under the leadership of the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), the committee is working on a \$375 billion reauthorization bill. Mr. Speaker, \$375 billion is within the funding levels recommended by the U.S. DOT's "Conditions and Performance Report." Mr. Speaker, \$375 billion is needed to maintain and improve our highways and transit systems.

I strongly believe that TEA-LU will adequately fund our national surface transportation needs. And just as important, it will be a shot in the arm for our struggling national economy. It will create jobs and put people back to work.

Over the last several months, much of the debate has centered on the highway user fee, or gas tax. User fees and taxes are never popular, but leadership requires making tough decisions.

Let us be perfectly clear. I support an increase in the highway user fee. I support depositing these revenues in the Highway Trust Fund to pay for surface transportation needs, and I do not stand alone on this.

In fact, I stand with the majority of Americans on this issue. In a poll conducted by Zogby International in June 2003, 67 percent of those surveyed supported an increase in the highway user fee of up to 5 cents per gallon, provided those revenues went towards infrastructure improvements.

Putting this into perspective, a 5-cent increase in the highway user fee on gasoline will cost the average motorist an additional \$30 per year, which is about the same price as an oil change nowadays.

Instead of getting bogged down with the concept of user fees and taxes, we should all take a page from the history books.

Let us look back to 1982. Let us not forget that this Nation was in the midst of a recession when Ronald Wilson Reagan, a native Illinoisan, signed into law the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982, a bill that raised the gas tax by 5 cents. In his wisdom, he knew the importance of increasing highway and transit funding. He knew the importance of investing for the future. He knew that the cost to the average motorist would be small, while the benefits to the national transportation system would be immense. But most importantly, Ronald Reagan knew that a \$151 billion surface transportation funding bill would create jobs and provide immense benefits for a sluggish economy stuck in a recession back in 1982.

Reagan also pointed out that the gas tax is not a tax, it is a user fee. An increase in the highway user fee would simply be deposited in the Highway Trust Fund, and there it would be used to improve our Nation's transportation system and would have no impact on our Federal deficit.

Highway user fees are, as President Reagan noted, simply good tax policy.

His successor, President George Herbert Walker Bush, also recognized the importance of public works investments and economic vitality. When he signed ISTEA into law in 1991, he said the highway bill could be summed up in three words: "jobs, jobs, jobs." That is just as true today.

Each \$1 billion invested in infrastructure creates 47,500 jobs and \$6.1 billion in related economic activity. For the price of a few cents per gallon, we can craft a \$375 billion transportation investment bill that would potentially create millions of new jobs. That is an investment for our American working families today as well as an investment for our Nation's future. For the price of a simple oil change, we can reauthorize the Highway Trust Fund at \$375 billion. It would not only ensure our transportation system will be second to none in the world; it would also create jobs and stimulate the economy without impacting the Federal deficit. What is not to like?

But right here, right now, it is really about jobs, jobs, jobs. We need to create good-paying jobs. We need to put people back to work. We need a \$375 billion surface transportation bill.

Let us not lose sight of these public policy objectives in these trying economic times.

In conclusion, let me once again say that the sure way to improve this economy, to improve transportation, to improve highways in this country is to

support a bill for \$375 billion that will ensure America being, as it is today, the leader in the world in transportation.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Ranking Member LIPINSKI for his leadership and for organizing this time for a special order this evening.

The need for infrastructure investment is greater than ever.

The U.S. economy desperately needs a shot in the arm.

Our economy is in dismal shape. Unemployment numbers are the highest ever in the last decade.

With this Bush Recession, family incomes are falling across the board, and falling most rapidly among lower-income workers.

The increase in unemployment of the last two and a half years has had a disproportionate effect on people of color.

The rate of unemployment for African Americans is 10.9 percent—more than twice the rate for whites.

We need to put people back to work in this country, and we need to get this economy going again.

Transportation infrastructure investment will do just that.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), every \$1 billion invested in infrastructure generates 47,500 jobs and \$6.1 billion in related economic activity.

The 375 billion dollar surface transportation bill that the bipartisan membership of the Transportation Committee supports reflects the needs expressed in the Department of Transportation's own needs assessments!

The legislation would potentially create over 1.3 million new good-paying jobs. This bill would put people back to work, and this is just what the American economy needs.

We face rising costs—in congestion, in wasted fuel, in frustration, and in air quality.

I support an increase in the gas user fee because we can not afford to allow infrastructure to continue to crumble.

We cannot afford to bare the increasing cost of congestion (which was 67.5 billion dollars in 2000).

We cannot afford the healthcare costs we will face as a result of breathing polluted air.

Unfortunately, the Bush Administration and the House and Senate Republican leaderships now obstruct our efforts to pass a 6 year bill that adequately funds transportation infrastructure.

But the need to invest in public infrastructure is genuine, and moving forward requires additional funding.

Investment in infrastructure will improve mobility, productivity, and our quality of life.

President Bush's tax cuts have only further harmed our economy.

The Transportation Committee's legislation will provide REAL stimulus to our economy, and it will finally put people back to work.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

□ 2100

THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH BEFORE THE UNITED NATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FRANKS of Arizona). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a deep sense of gratitude as an American in the wake of the courageous and determined address that the President of the United States made before the United Nations yesterday. The temptation for the President, Mr. Speaker, was clear. It was to respond to weeks and months of withering criticisms about our historic allies and to go into the chamber of the United Nations with a tone of apology, a tone of conciliation. But that is precisely not what President George W. Bush did.

Yesterday, the President of the United States strode into that chamber and with our allies and even some of our antagonists represented in the audience, even including in the war on Iraq, the leaders of nations that opposed our coalition, President Gerhard Schroeder of Germany and President Chirac of France were in the audience and listening, but the President did not mumble; he did not apologize. He came and explained the challenges that we face in Iraq. He embraced the nations, some 32 in number, who joined together in a coalition for nothing less than the advancement of freedom for the people of Iraq.

It was, in sum total, Mr. Speaker, one of the finest addresses I believe that the President has made since taking office in January of 2001.

And I was here on the floor of the Congress when the President came in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 and spoke those courageous words. But yesterday speaking to the world, the President of the United States struck the right tone. It was that we are not here in any way to gloat, but neither are we here to apologize for doing the necessary work of freedom in the world, for taking the 16 separate pronouncements of the United Nations seriously, and leading a coalition to enforce them against a tyrannical dictatorship in Baghdad.

The United States had nothing to apologize for, and the President was right, in words and in tone, not to apologize. But let me also say that the President was right to go to the United Nations and challenge that body and its membership to come alongside those of us that advance freedom and human rights in Iraq, saying that for the members of the United Nations there was, "a role to play in humanitarian assistance, in the establishment of a transition to a free and democratic government."

I also commend the President for identifying that proper role for the

United Nations to play. And so it seems to me all together, Mr. Speaker, that President George W. Bush, struck exactly the right balance. He spoke glowingly of our role in advancing freedom for the people of Iraq, in standing up for the rule of law and human rights in the world as Americans have done for other peoples throughout our history.

The President also said there is a role for allies now, to let bygones be bygones, to come alongside and to be a positive force as an international community for change for the people of Iraq that will be stable, that will be permanent, and that could literally change the landscape of that torn region of the world for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the President of the United States for being a man of principle, a man of freedom, and a true leader on the world stage.

OUR NATION'S IMMIGRATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. TANCREDI. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to talk about an issue that often compels me to come to this floor and express to my colleagues my concerns about, I think, one of the most pressing public policy issues that we face as this Nation, and certainly as the Congress of the United States, and that is the issue of massive immigration, legal and illegal, into the country and what that means for us as a Nation.

And I say that, Mr. Speaker, because I believe with all my heart that there are massive, to use the word again, massive, implications of massive immigration, both legal and illegal.

And some may be very good, some may have value, and some may be very, very bad. And it behooves us, it seems to me, as the body that is charged with the responsibility for being, perhaps, the foremost marketplace of ideas in the country, it behooves us to at least talk about these issues.

And I suggest that we talk about it because I know, Mr. Speaker, that America is talking about it, America around the water cooler, America around the unemployment line, America across neighborhood fences, America is talking about this, and America is worried about this issue.

They are worried about many things, and they are accepting of many things. They, I think for the most part, look at immigration as certainly I do, as being something that has been beneficial to the Nation, that has provided for us a diverse population and culture that certainly is the envy of the world in many respects and has been immensely rewarding to us as a Nation. It is a rich environment in which we all can exist and prosper.